

Just Wright

Is a good home good enough?

by Phyllis Wright



*Wright is director of
animal sheltering and
control for HSUS.*

SHELTER SENSE

The Humane Society
of the United States
2100 L St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Finding a new home for a stray or abandoned animal is one of the happier parts of the animal shelter employee's job.

It's always a pleasure to give an animal to a family that you have checked and that you know will provide food, shelter, exercise and affection. When the fees are collected and the papers signed, you can send the dog or cat off with its new owners, breathe a sigh of relief and get back to work. Right?

Wrong! Finding caring parents for stray or abandoned animals is a big part of the shelter's job -- but the adoptions you complete today can come back to haunt you tomorrow unless you include three very important provisions in your adoption agreement:

-- Make sure that your adoption agreement requires the animals to be spayed or neutered. It defeats your purpose to release fertile animals into your community where they will most likely breed more animals to be rounded up and somehow disposed of -- by you.

-- Specify in your adoption agreement that if the owner becomes unable to care for the animal, it will be returned to the shelter and not abandoned to the streets. Much of your time and energy is probably spent in picking up strays -- don't add to your work by allowing adopters to turn their animals out into the streets when they no longer care for them.

-- Include in your agreement the provision that you can investigate the animal's new home and reclaim the animal if it is not cared for, or if the owner is violating any part of the adoption agreement. This provision puts teeth into your entire adoption program.

A good home that includes food, shelter, exercise and adult attention is not good enough -- take a step toward solving the animal control problems in the community by including the three provisions above in your animal adoption agreement. ■

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, D.C.
PERMIT NO. 42828
